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## The Use of Models in the Study of Organised Crime<sup>294</sup>

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The study of organised crime as a scientific endeavour has come a long way since the first works by Frederic Thrasher (1927) and John Landesco (1929), but despite all efforts in the meantime, research has remained largely descriptive with little progress in the direction of theory building. In this paper one avenue is examined which can potentially lead to a better theoretical understanding of organised crime, the use of models as heuristic devices.

### 1. Models and Theory Construction

Theorising is closely linked to the development and use of models. Models are sometimes treated as synonymous with theory, sometimes they are seen as necessary precursors to theories, sometimes they are seen as tools to test and apply theories (Morrison & Morgan, 1999). There is a philosophical debate on the nature, purpose and value of scientific models. It is not clear what exactly models should do and how meaningful they can really be. Still, taking a pragmatic stance it seems fair to say that models are representations of reality, though on a lower level of complexity. They provide a meaningful context for specific findings by converting implicit assumptions into explicit postulates and hypotheses (Girshick & Lerner, 1950-1951: 714). In this sense, models may be an appropriate device for exploring such a highly complex and elusive issue as organised crime. However, in the pertinent literature this is not necessarily what is associated with "models of organised crime". In fact, the term "model" has been used more in the sense of perspectives or descriptive concepts, as will be argued in the first part of this paper. The focus will then shift to the question of how valuable scientific models can be in the study of organised crime. Drawing on a general classification of models in the social sciences which distinguishes between causal and analytical models, analytical models will be advocated as the most appropriate conceptual framework for further research on organised crime. To illustrate this point, an analytical model of organised crime will be presented which is derived primarily from a review of the organised crime literature in the United States.

### 2. Classifications of Descriptive "Models of Organised Crime"

The notion of "models of organised crime" has in the past been most closely linked to a threefold classification proposed by Jay Albanese (1989; 1994; 2011), who distinguishes a "hierarchical model", a "patron-client model" and an "enterprise model"

<sup>294</sup> This is the substantially revised, extended and updated version of a paper presented at the 2003 general conference of the European Consortium for Political Research in Marburg, Germany. The paper has subsequently been posted on the internet and has been cited and plagiarized over the years. The festschrift honouring Petrus van Duyne, who has been a colleague, mentor and friend to me during this time, seems to be the appropriate place to finally publish a version of this paper in a proper form.

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of organised crime. All three “models” originally referred to the American Cosa Nostra. The “hierarchical model” pertains to the official view that emerged during the 1950s and 1960s which framed organised crime, synonymous with Cosa Nostra, in terms of a nationwide bureaucratic organisational entity (Cressey, 1969). The “patron-client model” refers to the works of Joe Albini (1971) and Francis Ianni and Elizabeth Reuss-Ianni (1972) who re-conceptualised the associations of Italian-American criminals as webs of asymmetric ties (patron-client relationships) embedded in local or ethnic networks. The “enterprise model”, finally, is associated with Dwight C. Smith’s (1975; 1980) “spectrum-based theory of enterprise” which centres around economic activities and the primacy of market forces over group structures. As Jay Albanese himself has emphasised, these “models” really represent different ways of looking at organised crime, different “paradigms” in Albanese’s wording, which he believes can fruitfully be combined to get a more complete picture (Albanese, 1994; 2011).

In a similar vein, Dickie and Wilson (1993) have distinguished two “major theoretical models” of organised crime: a “mafia or evolution-centralist model” and a “social systems” model. The “mafia model” is understood in roughly the same way as Albanese’s “hierarchical model” in that it refers to a view that associates organised crime with ethnically homogeneous bureaucratic criminal organisations. The “social systems” perspective, on the other hand, is similar to Albanese’s “patron-client model” of criminal associations based on kinship ties or patron-client relationships (see also Abadinsky, 2010).

Frank Hagan, finally, has integrated the various perspectives in his “continuum or ordinal model of organised crime” (1983: 54; see also Hagan, 2006). This model is designed to help determine how closely a criminal group, respectively its activities, resembles the ideal-typical imagery of a bureaucratic mafia organisation.

### 3. Classifications of Causal “Models of Organised Crime”

Some authors have gone beyond an understanding of “models of organised crime” as devices primarily for classifying manifestations of organised crime on the descriptive level. An explanatory dimension was added to the notion of “models of organised crime” by Boronia Halstead in a paper published in a 1998 issue of the journal “Transnational Organised Crime” (Halstead 1998), and in a paper by Phil Williams and Roy Godson that appeared in a 2002 issue of the journal “Crime, Law and Social Change” (Williams & Godson 2002).

Halstead (1998) distinguished different “models” not only by the underlying conception of the nature of organised crime but also by specific social conditions that are assumed to be responsible for the emergence of one or the other manifestation of organised crime. She distinguished two broad categories, “group-focused models” and “economic models”; and within these categories she differentiated various “models” that emphasise particular aspects, for example, the structure, activities and social embeddedness of criminal groups. Halstead highlights the explanatory power of these models with regard to factors that lead to or facilitate the emergence or shaping of organised crime phenomena on the micro or macro level.

On the micro level Halstead discusses, for example, how illegal enterprises can be perceived as organisations influenced by internal and external stakeholders. Halstead (1998: 8), drawing on the multiple-constituency approach in organisation theory (see Bedeian & Zammuto, 1991: 68), explains:

“Applying this model to organised crime, a particular illicit enterprise might be analysed by identifying the various factions or stakeholders with an interest in the enterprise, examining the nature of the interest and assessing how the range of interests interact and what the power relationships between the interests might be. For example, in the market for an illegal commodity such as cannabis, these interests would include cannabis users, cannabis wholesalers, cannabis retailers, law enforcement policy makers, law enforcers, health policy makers, corrupt public officials, and other less obvious groups, such as the media. The interaction between these constituencies and the relative power relationships between them will determine the nature of the illicit enterprise. The multiple constituencies approach draws into focus the fact that agents that might have an impact on the structure and operation of illicit enterprise are not just those who gain directly from it”.

Other models identified by Halstead relate to macro level phenomena such as illegal markets, which are discussed with regard to external regulation and internal business culture (Halstead, 1998: 16).

Williams and Godson (2002) take the discussion yet another step further by linking certain social conditions with certain manifestations of organised crime and these, in turn, with certain social consequences or impacts. In their discussion of a methodology for anticipating “the further evolution of organised crime” (p. 315), Williams and Godson distinguish several potentially predictive “models” that emphasise causal relations between certain environmental conditions, certain manifestations of organised crime and certain outcomes. “Political models”, they argue, can explain the increase in particular types of crime and the emergence of criminal structures as the result of a weak state, an authoritarian form of government, and a low degree of the institutionalisation of the rule of law (Williams & Godson, 2002: 315-323). “Economic models”, in their typology, include those approaches which attempt to predict organised criminal behaviour with a view to the dynamics of supply and demand and the levels of control of illegal goods and services (Williams & Godson, 2002: 322-328). “Social models”, the third type of models defined by Williams and Godson (2002: 328), emphasise the cultural basis for organised crime, the idea of criminal networks as a social system, and the importance of trust and bonding mechanisms as the basis for criminal organisation. The “strategic or risk management model”, in turn, conceptualises the activities of criminal enterprises, for example the corruption of public officials or the exploitation of safe havens, as means to minimise risks emanating from operating in a hostile environment (Williams & Godson, 2002: 335-339). Finally, Williams and Godson’s typology includes “hybrid or composite models” which variously combine political, economic, social, and strategy factors to predict, for example, that in certain states characterised by weak government, economic dislocation, and social upheaval, transnational criminal organisations will take control of much of the domestic economy to use it as a basis for operating in host states where lucrative markets and supporting ethnic networks exist (Williams & Godson, 2002: 340-347).

### 4. Organised Crime as an Object of Study

What the “models” identified by Albanese, Dickie and Wilson, Hagan, Halstead, and Williams and Godson have in common is a strong orientation towards concrete events and settings. The “models” are largely constructed with specific historical manifestations of organised crime in mind that have emerged under specific historical and cultural conditions.

The resulting limits in applicability can only be overcome to a certain extent by combining different theoretical approaches. The resulting composite models, although

they potentially touch a wide range of issues, still fall short of an overall framework designed to consistently analyse and compare phenomena across historical and cultural variations. These composite models arrange and link phenomena more or less as if the only possible constellations are those defined by specific historical cases.

In contrast, when we speak of organised crime research as a process of creating a cumulative body of knowledge (von Lampe, 2002), we need a conceptual framework that allows for the empirical existence of any conceivable constellation of the phenomena that fall under the umbrella concept of organised crime, regardless of whether or not they resemble commonly known events or stereotypical imagery.

At this point, it is important to clarify the understanding underlying this paper regarding organised crime as the object of study. The approach advocated here is based on the assumption that “organised crime” is first and foremost a construct, “a non-empirical social and mental construction” (van Duyne, 2003: 29). It reflects social reality as much as the emotions, prejudices and ideologies of those involved in the construction process. From a sociological perspective, such constructs cannot be accepted at face value. At the same time, they cannot simply be brushed aside. Rather, it is the duty of the social sciences to define and categorise the underlying phenomena and to explore through empirical observation what intricate links exist that would justify placing all these diverse phenomena in one theoretical context (von Lampe, 2009: 165-166). Such an approach does not assume the existence of a coherent phenomenon which encompasses all the facets of the public and scholarly discourse on organised crime. On the other hand, it does not exclude the possibility that all of these facets can indeed be meaningfully studied within one framework.

## 5. Causal Models and Analytical Models

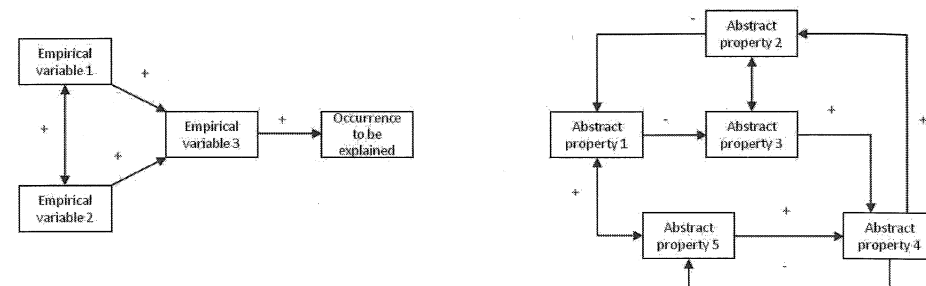
In the following discussion the term “model” will be used in a narrow sense as proposed by sociologist Jonathan Turner (1991). He defines a model as

“a diagrammatic representation of social events. The diagrammatic elements of any model include: (1) concepts that denote and highlight certain features of the universe; (2) the arrangement of these concepts in visual space so as to reflect the ordering of events in the universe; and (3) symbols that mark the connections among concepts, such as lines, arrows, vectors, and so on” (Turner, 1991: 15-16).

Turner (1991: 17) distinguishes two essential types of models: causal models and analytical models (Fig. 1). A third type of model, simulation models, can be potentially useful in the future. However, their purpose lies more in testing and applying rather than in developing theories. In other words, some level of theory building is a precondition for constructing a simulation model. Currently, simulation models of organised crime seem to be the domain of computer game developers. It would be a fun topic for a dissertation to examine these efforts in light of existing empirical research and theorising on organised crime.

In Turner’s terminology, causal models aim at explaining a dependent variable by one or more independent variables. Causal models thus present a simple lineal view of causality. Analytical models, in contrast, portray a complex set of connections among a set of variables, typically to capture “relations among more abstract and generic processes” (Turner, 1991: 18).

**Figure 1 – Causal Model and Analytical Model**



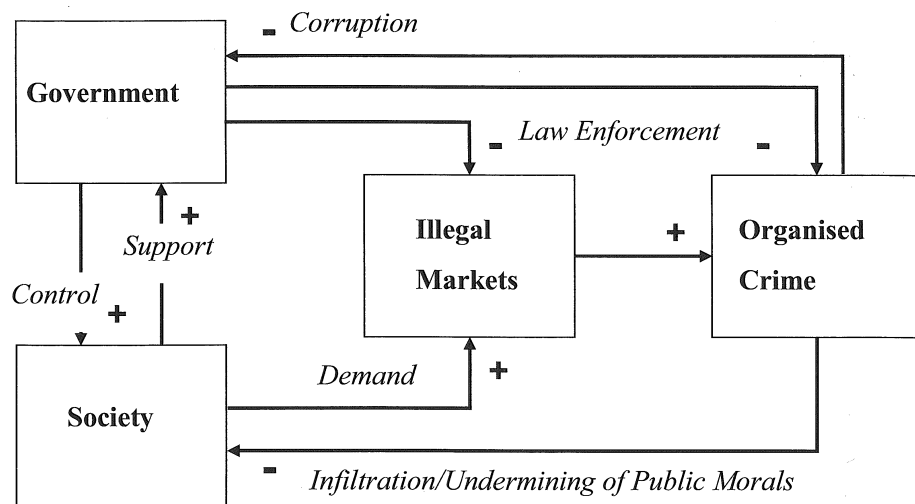
Source: Turner (1991: 19)

## 6. Causal Models of Organised Crime

Causal models are implicit in many works on organised crime. They tend to conceptualise organised crime, or one particular aspect of it, as a one-dimensional phenomenon varying along a spectrum from bad to worse. The “models” described by Halstead (1998) and Williams and Godson (2002) largely fall into this category.

A classical example (Fig. 2) is provided by Donald Cressey, who in his treatise “Theft of the Nation” on the American Cosa Nostra (Cressey, 1969) discussed how the demands for illegal goods and services nurtured the emergence of ever more centralised and ever more powerful crime syndicates which eventually succeed in undermining public morals, neutralising law enforcement through corruption and infiltrating the legal economy unless appropriate countermeasures are taken. Cressey himself did not present a model in the narrow sense of the word, but his theoretical proposition can be depicted in a model comprising four elements: government, society, illegal markets and organised crime (von Lampe, 1999: 308). While interrelations are acknowledged in both directions between the model elements, in the last instance Cressey’s intention is to explain variations in the power and reach of organised crime in the sense of an organisational entity.

Figure 2 – “Cressey Model”



Source: von Lampe (1999: 308)

The major shortcoming of such a causal model is the narrow focus as a consequence of the conceptualisation of organised crime, or a particular aspect of it, as an essentially one-dimensional dependent variable. This makes it difficult, if not impossible, to account for variations in the manifestation of organised crime or for different paths of development. Cressey's model, for example, fails to consider the possibility that despite flourishing illegal markets, criminal groups may not necessarily become ever more powerful, but instead remain in a position of inferiority *vis-à-vis* corrupt political and business elites who maintain and possibly extend their control over state and economic resources (von Lampe, 1999: 313-4), as has vividly been described by Bill Chambliss in his analysis of crime and politics in the city of Seattle (Chambliss, 1978).

A causal model which does not take some conception of organised crime as the dependent variable is at the core of the risk-assessment methodology advocated by Tom Vander Beken and his colleagues (Black, Vander Beken, Frans & Paternotte, 2001; Vander Beken, 2004). This implicit model seeks to predict the potential adverse impact of organised crime on society through an integrated analysis of three main aspects: 1) the broader environment, 2) legal and illegal markets, and 3) organised crime groups (Vander Beken, 2004: 487). The broader environment encompasses, for example, the spheres of technology, culture, economy and politics (Vander Beken, 2004: 488). Legal markets are examined within this framework with a view to vulnerabilities to organised crime involvement (Vander Beken, 2004: 505), while for illegal markets the focus is on the profit-making opportunities they provide for organised crime groups (Vander Beken, 2004: 498). Organised crime groups, finally, are included in the model with an emphasis on certain group attributes, divided into two broad categories, "intent" and "capability" (Vander Beken, 2004: 494). The underlying assumption is that the more harmful the intended purposes of criminal groups and the higher their capacities for wrongdoing, and at the same time the greater the opportunities in illegal markets and the higher the vulnerabilities in particular sectors of the licit economy, all influenced by

developments in the broader environment, the higher the risks for society to suffer from organised criminal activity.

The risk-assessment methodology of organised crime has never been fully formulated as a model and depicted in graphical form. While some elements have been spelled out in considerable detail, namely a number of attributes of organised crime groups, the overall anatomy of the model elements and their assumed interrelations have remained vague (see von Lampe, 2004). In fact, the finalisation of the model has been explicitly left to the expertise of those who are supposed to apply the risk methodology as part of efforts to measure organised crime (Vander Beken, 2004: 486, 493).

Parallel to the development of the risk-assessment methodology a model encompassing some of the same dimensions has been developed in the form of a "model of the contextuality of organised crime" (von Lampe, 2005: 232). This model, however, is not a causal model but falls under the category of analytical models.

## 7. Analytical Models of Organised Crime

In comparison with causal models it seems that analytical modelling schemes have two advantages for the study of organised crime: (1) they correspond much more to the complexity and multi-dimensionality of the structures, events and processes that are lumped together under the term "organised crime", and (2) they better fulfil the present needs of organised crime research, which is really still in its infant stage, by helping to tentatively order data and to formulate research questions. Given the fragmentary nature of the current knowledge on organised crime, analytical models can be employed as heuristic devices that display aspects of interest and map connections between them either based on existing empirical findings or based on plausible assumptions. Understood in this way, analytical models may form the starting point, and a comprehensive framework for more systematic and better coordinated future research.

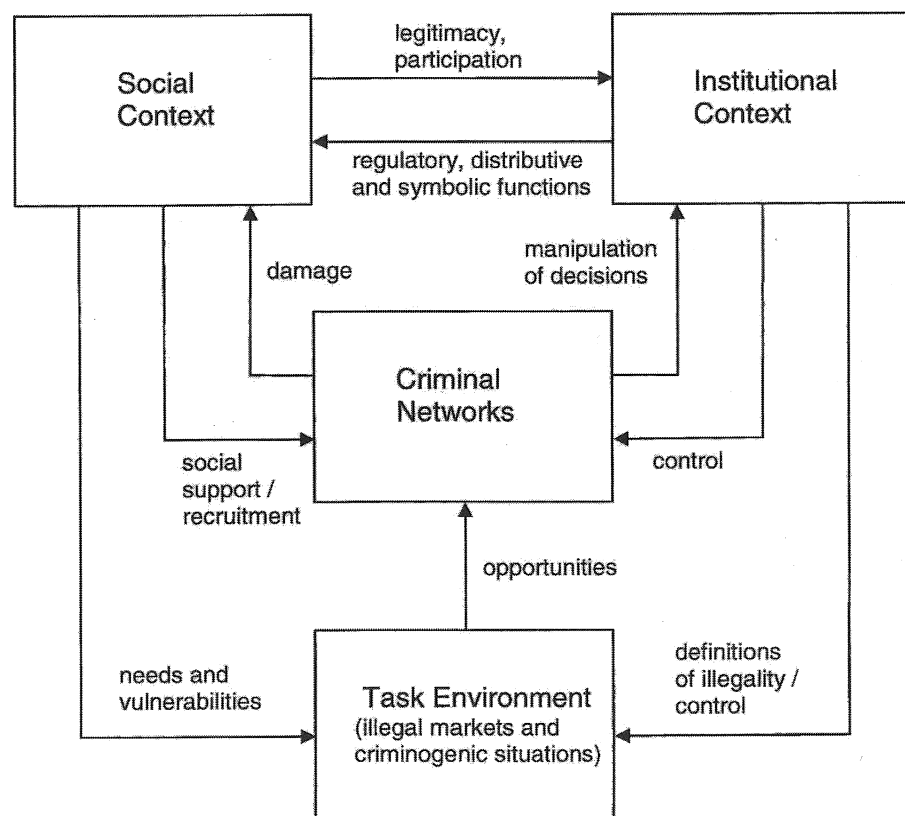
### 7.1. A simple four-element analytical model of organised crime

The "model of the contextuality of organised crime" (von Lampe, 2005) mentioned above is a fairly simple analytical model comprising four elements: "criminal networks" and their "task environment" as well as the "social context" and the "institutional context" (Fig. 3). This model is based on the assumption that criminal networks, i.e. offenders connected for the purpose of committing predatory and victimless crimes, at any given point in space and time face a task environment providing certain opportunities for crime. The task environment in turn is influenced by social, economic and cultural conditions on the one hand, and the institutional-legal framework on the other. The crime opportunities available to offenders are shaped, for example, by the demand for illegal goods and services and vulnerabilities to predatory crimes, and by criminalisation policies and law enforcement strategies (von Lampe, 2005: 232). The model also assumes that criminal networks are directly influenced by the social and institutional context. Law enforcement, for example, sets constraints to the formation and organisation of criminal networks, while socio-economic conditions influence the recruitment-base of criminal networks (von Lampe, 2005: 232-233). The model also takes into account that criminal networks may shape their immediate and broader environment, for example by manipulating decision-making processes within government and the private sector through corruption and intimidation (von Lampe, 2004: 234).



Although the model consists of only four elements, numerous facets of the organised crime discourse can be highlighted. At the same time many details are lost. For example, similar to the “Cressey Model” (Cressey, 1969) and the risk-based methodology (Vander Beken, 2004), the concept of “organised crime” is conflated into one element of the model, “criminal networks”. In the following section a more complex model will be discussed which breaks the concept of “organised crime” down into several model elements.

**Figure 3** – “A model of the contextuality of organised crime”



Source: von Lampe (2005: 232)

## 7.2. Constructing a more complex analytical model of organised crime

The complex analytical model of organised crime presented here is based on a systematic review of the American literature on organised crime in the U.S. (von Lampe, 1999). However, the model is intended to capture the situation in any given geographical area that shows some level of political coherence, for example a municipality or a nation state. This analytical model will be presented in a step-by-step way following the process of model construction. Because of its complexity, discussing the model in any detail is beyond the scope of this paper.

## 7.3. Selecting Model Elements

The first step in the construction of an analytical model of organised crime is to determine what aspects of the social universe to include. This is not so much a definitional question than a matter of tentatively marking out a field of study. In the absence of an agreed-upon, authoritative definition of the term “organised crime” (Finckenauer, 2005; van Duyne, 1996), the only fairly inclusive approach seems to be one which outlines the field of study by the scope of the public and scientific debate. Organised crime, then, is what people so label. This includes just about any kind of cooperation for the rational, i.e. non-impulsive, commission of illegal acts, regardless of the social status or the motives of the perpetrators (von Lampe, 2002: 195). Accordingly, the elements of the model should be selected with a view to those factors that either represent or significantly influence the emergence and continued existence of patterns of criminal cooperation for the rational commission of criminal acts.

I would argue that any meaningful model of organised crime has to include six basic elements, three representing what has variously been labelled ‘organised crime’, and three elements representing environmental factors.

The three core elements are:

- the actors who cooperate in rational, non-impulsive criminal activities;
- the structures that connect these actors;
- the criminal activities these actors are involved in.

The three environmental elements are:

- society;
- government;
- and the realm of public discourse, i.e. the media.

Even on this high level of abstraction, a variety of interesting connections can be mapped. To begin with, there is no organised crime without organised criminals, and these organised criminals are, at least in part, a product of their social environment, characterised, for example, by social and cultural cleavages (Ianni, 1974; Landesco, 1929; Merton, 1968). In turn, the types of crimes these criminal actors are engaged in may depend on personal skills, just as certain cooperative structures may in part depend on individual properties such as reliability and sociability (Adler, 1985; Best & Luckenbill, 1994). At the same time, criminal structures are influenced by the type of activity they serve. An extortion gang, for example, requires structures different from an illegal casino (Block, 1983). Indirectly, then, social factors can influence the shape of criminal structures, for example, through the demand for particular illicit goods and services that require one or the other type of group structure. The same applies, of course, to the government. It has been repeatedly argued that law enforcement pressure impedes the emergence of complex criminal structures (Reuter, 1983; Southerland & Potter, 1993). Government plays a role in other ways as well, for example by adopting crime prevention policies or by creating opportunities for criminal activities such as through raising taxes for goods like alcohol or cigarettes, not to mention the power to define certain acts as illegal. As Petrus van Duyne (2003: 41) has put it, the law is “the great creator of forbidden fruits, its subsequent enhanced sweetness (and prices), and the ensuing criminal markets to supply the illegal demand”. The Media, finally, can be a crucial factor by raising or shifting attention to certain phenomena, for example certain areas of crime, certain criminal groups or certain ethnic groups (Lombardo, 2010).

Smith (1994: 144) even speaks of the media as an “external constituency” of criminal organisations.

#### 7.4. Determining the Level of Abstraction

The second step in the construction of an analytical model of organised crime is to determine the level of abstraction, or, the degree of aggregation, respectively, disaggregation. There are manifold ways to further differentiate the model and to break down the elements into ever smaller units of analysis. How far one should go depends largely on the respective research question that the model is supposed to help formulate or answer. There are, however, three differentiations pertaining to the nature of criminal structures that need to be made in order to avoid comparing apples and oranges.

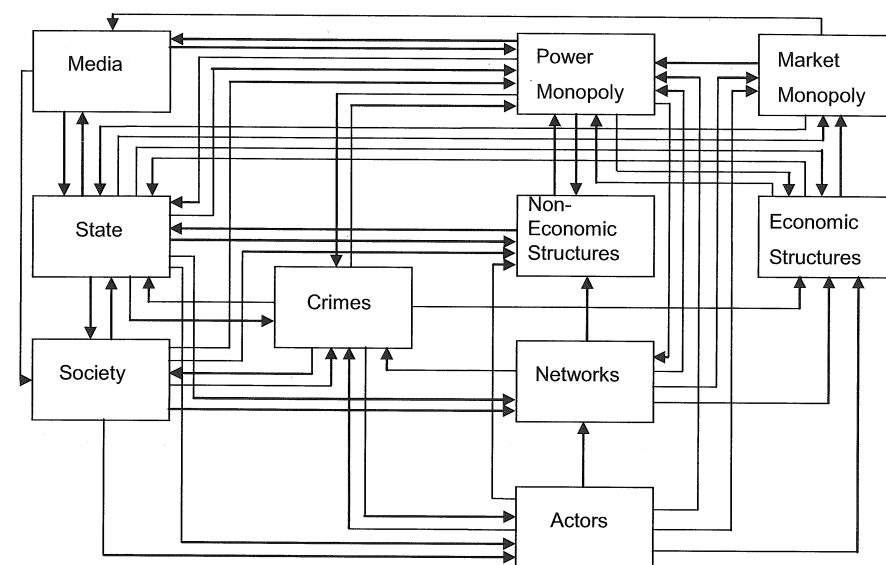
The first differentiation is between criminal networks in the sense of webs of criminally exploitable ties as latent structures, on the one hand, and patterns of criminal cooperation as manifest structures, on the other hand. The underlying assumption is that a great deal of what is labelled organised crime involves the flexible use of personal ties for the commission of criminal acts (Ianni, 1974; Morselli, 2006; Potter, 1994). This means that there are webs of personal ties connecting criminal actors that could be activated for criminal cooperation but only a certain share of these ties are actually used at any given point in time.

The second differentiation accounts for the fact that criminal structures can serve different functions. In essence, all criminal structures serve one or more of three purposes: economic, social and quasi-governmental. The crucial distinction here is between economic and non-economic functions because it allows one to distinguish, analytically, between illegal enterprises in a broad sense, including market-oriented groups as well as predatory criminal groups, and fraternal associations such as the American Cosa Nostra which only indirectly, through their individual members, are involved in crime for material gain (Anderson, 1979; Haller, 1992). It should be obvious that there are substantial differences in the conditions for their emergence and their impact on the immediate and broader environment, notwithstanding the possibility that economic and non-economic functions may empirically overlap.

The third differentiation pertains to micro and macro structures within the sphere of illegality. There are not only criminal collectives that form out of economic or socio-cultural interests, but there are also, potentially, overarching structures that concentrate power in a given illegal market or geographical area (Reuter, 1994). Following the distinction between economic and non-economic structures, these entities can be divided into two categories: (1) illegal market monopolies (Hellman, 1980; Luksetich & White, 1982), and (2) quasi-governmental ‘power syndicates’ holding a monopoly of violence (Block, 1983).

On this level of abstraction, the model can address two key questions that have been raised in the organised crime debate: (1) how patterns of criminal cooperation emerge and are transformed, and (2) how within those criminal structures positions of power develop that are relevant for the criminal structures themselves and for society at large (see von Lampe, 2001).

Figure 4 – An Analytical Model of Organised Crime



#### 7.5. Connecting the Model Elements

The third step in the construction of an analytical model is to determine by what kinds of links the model elements are connected. In the way modelling is understood here, this is an ongoing process which accompanies the entire research process (see also Morrison, 2002). From the onset it is important to note that elements are not necessarily connected simply by unidirectional causal links. Rather, it can be expected to encounter complex interrelationships among the components of the model.

In the diagram shown above (Fig. 4) the connections between the elements are mapped based on a review of the academic literature primarily pertaining to the United States (von Lampe, 1999: 322). It seems clear that the limits of diagrammatic representation are quickly reached. However, the model, still serves to capture some important complexities.

To illustrate this point, some of the factors potentially influencing the emergence of an illegal monopoly of violence over a given territory in the hands of a crime syndicate can be highlighted. The ideal-typical picture is that of illegal actors operating in this geographical area being subordinated to a criminal group which controls the use of violence, sets and enforces rules of conduct and levies a tax on criminal activities (Reuter, 1994). Such a constellation can in some respects be regarded as the natural outcome of a process that takes effect under conditions of illegality. Assuming a state of anarchy as the starting point of the development, criminal actors have to decide how to allocate their resources between productive and unproductive activities, or, in other words, between generating an output or influencing its distribution. The assumption is that one group of actors (one out of a number of “Networks” emerging as “Non-Economic Structures”) will emerge with an ever increasing potential for violence while

all other actors (individual "Actors" and "Networks") will find it increasingly useless to invest resources in the potential for violence themselves (Skaperdas & Syropoulos, 1995). In fact, the monopolisation of violence can work for the benefit of all, because it will tend to reduce the overall level of violence (Hellman, 1980; Luksetich & White, 1982).

The emergence of a 'power syndicate' ("Power Monopoly"), however, appears to be dependent on the presence or absence, respectively, of a number of conducive and countervailing factors. First of all, 'power syndicates' need to have personnel ("Actors") capable of using violence effectively. Secondly, the existence of a 'power syndicate' implies the ability to monitor the criminal activities ("Crimes") of other criminal actors. Given the clandestine nature of most areas of crime, this will tend to be possible only where criminal actors are integrated in dense networks that guarantee a free flow of information, or where illegal activities are characterised by high visibility, continuity and fixed places of business, such as in the cases of illegal casino gambling and the street sale of illicit goods (Schelling, 1971). This, in turn, presupposes not only a demand for these goods and services but also a certain level of tolerance on the part of the society at large ("Society") and a lack of motivation, possibly brought about through corruption, or a lack of resources on the part of law enforcement ("State") to stop such illegal activities (Southerland & Potter, 1993). Furthermore, in order to maintain their position in a cost efficient way and to fend off free-riders, 'power syndicates' will try to establish an identifiable reputation for the effective use of violence (Gambetta, 1993; Reuter, 1983; 1994). This requires a sufficient level of recognisability which, at the same time, increases the visibility for law enforcement ("State"). Finally, the media potentially play an ambiguous role in this context. On the one hand, the media can help establish a reputation for particular criminal groups ("Networks"). On the other hand, concentrated media coverage will put pressure on law enforcement ("State") to focus on these same groups ("Networks"). These considerations imply a "cyclic or sinusoidal trend of organisation and disorganisation" (Hartmann & von Lampe, 2008: 134) characterised by the rise and subsequent downfall of one 'power syndicate', possibly followed by the rise and subsequent downfall of another 'power syndicate', as the most likely scenario in contrast to stereotypical imagery of ever-more powerful criminal organisations.

This example, of course, would have to be elaborated further in a thorough analysis. There are more ramifications to it than can be displayed in such a diagram and can be addressed in this chapter. Additional propositions would surely show an even higher degree of interconnectedness and a wider circle of influencing factors. Despite these limits, the model should help to put all the issues in perspective that have been raised in the organised crime debate.

## 8. Summary

To summarise the argument put forward in this chapter, it needs to be stressed again that the importance ascribed to models in the study of organised crime lies not so much in presenting final conclusions. Rather, models are here treated as heuristic devices that guide and systematise research.

The analytical model that has only been sketched in this paper is designed, on the one hand, to account for all dimensions of the problem that need to be considered, be they sociological, psychological, cultural, economic or political. On the other hand, the model is designed to apply to all conceivable historical and geographical settings. This

does not mean that all manifestations of organised crime are more or less identical and that the model elements will always have the same significance. On the contrary, it is the diversity of manifestations of organised crime under varying circumstances that will likely lead to the most valuable insights. The model provides a conceptual scheme for the analysis of each and every case in its own right, but from a comparative perspective with the use of the same terminology, within the same broad conceptual framework and with the same research questions in mind.

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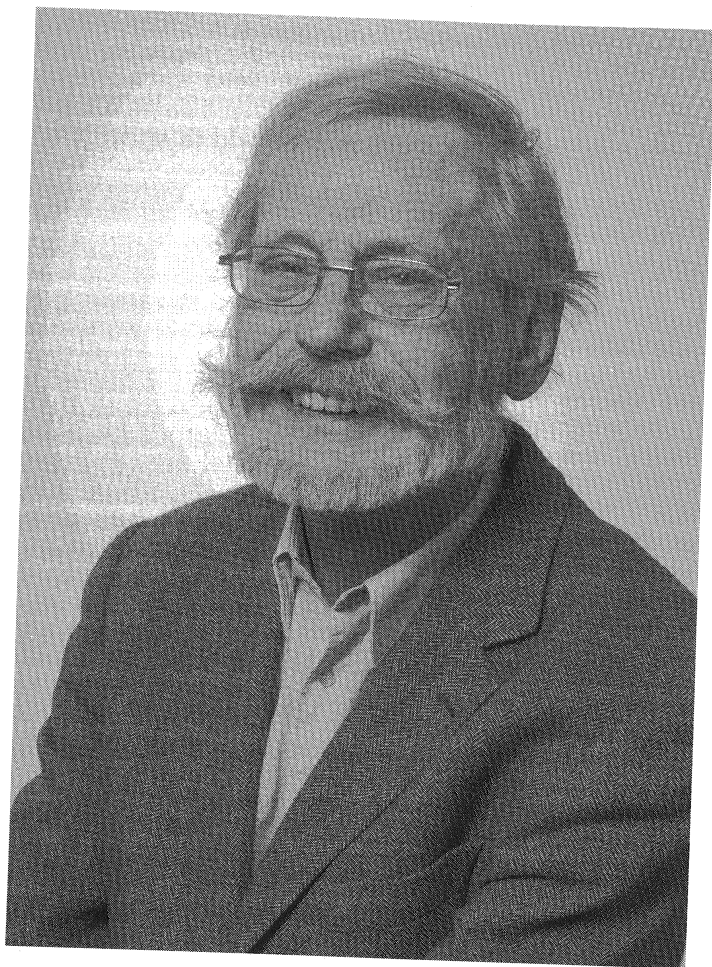
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